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Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, prepared pursuant to Assembly resolution 39/125 of 14 December 1984.

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Annex

Report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

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I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a review and update on the programme and activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for the year 1997. During the past year, UNIFEM focused on organizational reassessment and giving greater coherence and clarity to its programme directions. In the first quarter of 1997, UNIFEM developed its strategy and business plan, which delineates areas of focus and operations for the period 1997–1999. UNIFEM has adopted a programme strategy that is designed and guided by an empowerment framework, and based on the promotion of women's rights, opportunities and capacities. That empowerment framework is about changing or transforming power relations in favour of those who previously exercised little power over their own lives.

2. In General Assembly resolution 39/125 of 14 December 1984, UNIFEM was mandated to play an innovative and catalytic role in the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality. Its mandate is: (a) to support innovative and experimental activities benefiting women, in line with national and regional priorities; (b) to serve as a catalyst, with the goal of ensuring the appropriate involvement of women in mainstream development activities; and (c) to play an innovative and catalytic role in relation to the United Nations system of development cooperation.

3. In paragraph 335 of the Beijing Platform for Action, UNIFEM was requested to review and strengthen its work programme in light of the Platform for Action, focusing on women's economic and political empowerment, and to play an advocacy role, concentrating on fostering a multilateral policy dialogue on women's empowerment.

4. In paragraph 49 of its resolution 51/69 of 12 December 1996, entitled "Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action", the General Assembly commended the work of UNIFEM in providing a strategic and focused response to the follow-up and implementation of the Platform for Action through its advocacy and operational activities in support of women's economic and political empowerment, and encouraged the Fund to provide technical support to operationalize the Platform for Action at the national level through, *inter alia*, the resident coordinator system, and taking into account decision 1996/43 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund.

II. Programme

A. Overview

5. In fulfilment of the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action to strengthen its operational work and maximize the impact of its projects, UNIFEM's programmes focus on three thematic areas: strengthening women's economic capacity; engendering governance and leadership; and promoting women's human rights, and eliminating all forms of violence against women. The three thematic programme areas are addressed in relation to regional realities in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as placed within the larger global context.

6. UNIFEM is committed to intensifying support for programmes that link micro-level and macro-level practical and policy actions in its three thematic areas to meet emerging needs and priorities for gender mainstreaming and for building the capacity of women's organizations as economic and political actors.

7. In addition to focusing its programme by concentrating on three thematic areas, UNIFEM relies on five core strategies for promoting its empowerment approach: building the capacity and leadership of women's organizations and networks; leveraging political and financial support for women from a range of stakeholders in the development process; forging new synergies and effective partnerships among women's organizations, Government, the United Nations system and the private sector; undertaking pilot and demonstration projects to test innovative approaches to women's empowerment; and building an operational knowledge base to influence gender mainstreaming.

B. Strengthening women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs and producers, especially in the context of the new trade agenda and the emergence of new technologies

8. UNIFEM's economic empowerment programme focuses on the identification of opportunities for and threats to women's sustainable livelihoods within the context of globalization, trade liberalization and the emergence of new technologies. UNIFEM supports programmes that are designed to increase options for women – especially those living in poverty – strengthening their economic capacity as

entrepreneurs and producers, and creating strategic linkages between producers and support institutions, as well as between producer groups and markets.

9. UNIFEM works with women at the macro (policy), meso (institutional) and micro (households/individual) levels. Thus, UNIFEM's aims are to: (a) engender macroeconomic and sectoral level policies (especially trade, and information, communication and telecommunications policies) so as to minimize threats to and maximize opportunities for women's sustainable livelihoods; (b) engender public-sector and private-sector extension services/delivery mechanisms so as to ensure that any policy statements of benefit to women are translated into action and that women have equal access with men to economic and natural resources; and (c) design innovative and effective ways of overcoming constraints faced by women in gaining access to the resources they need to increase their economic capacity.

Policy-level activities

10. At the macro level, UNIFEM has been focusing on the issue of globalization, supporting research and the creation of regional forums to analyse the ways in which national, regional and international trade policies have differential impacts on women and men, and identifying strategies and opportunities for women to become more involved in the process of influencing trade policy-making. UNIFEM's work in bringing people from Government, United Nations agencies, trade organizations and non-governmental organizations together to explore this topic is being synthesized in a series of monographs focusing on the gender impact of regional trading practices.

11. In Latin America, for example, studies have been completed on the impact of trade liberalization, in particular the North American Free Trade Agreement, on women workers in the textiles and agricultural sectors in Mexico. In the Southern Cone, UNIFEM supported a second regional seminar to examine the implications and impact of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) treaty on women.

12. In Asia and the Pacific, studies have been completed on the impact of regional and global trade agreements on women in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Those findings will form the basis for a Pacific regional dialogue and a regional programme on women and trade, with a focus on the impact of the Lome 2000 agreement on women. There have been several follow-up activities to regional dialogues undertaken at New Delhi in 1994 (for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries), and at Bangkok in 1996 (for the Association of South-East Asian countries). In India, UNIFEM has been supporting the Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance Development Programme (TREAD) project which was developed and funded by the Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) following the SAARC meeting. The project will initially assist 45,000 women to enter export marketing in selected commodity areas.

13. In Africa, UNIFEM has been actively involved in several meetings on women and trade, including a regional Economic Community of West African States meeting held at Conakry, a Network Women in Development Europe/ Environmental Development Action regional seminar to discuss the European Union (EU) green paper and the impact of trade agreements on women's trade activities, and meetings in Gabon and at Kampala looking at the impact of and opportunities arising from the Lome Convention.

14. UNIFEM has focused on trade policies because of the major impact on women's livelihoods, and the comparative lack of available information and data. However, UNIFEM has also supported other macroeconomic activities, including the Women's Budget initiative, the collection of gender-sensitive statistics on women's work, influencing urban and other policies that have an impact on the urban poor, influencing science and technology and environmental policies, and the promotion of policies to provide social security for women workers in the informal sector.

15. In South Africa, UNIFEM has continued to support the Women's Budget initiative. That innovative project involves research by non-governmental organizations and women Members of Parliament on how the development and allocation of budget by sectors affects women's participation in development and their economic empowerment. A series of workshops will be organized to disseminate information on the budget, especially to women's groups, and results of studies will be presented to the Parliament to influence its discussions on the budget. UNIFEM is now preparing to replicate this model throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, and also has interest in replication of the Women's Budget project in Eastern Africa.

Capacity-building of women's organizations

16. At the intermediate level, UNIFEM develops programmes to strengthen women's organizations/ associations/unions, both to advocate for policy changes and to bargain for increased and equal access to economic resources; engender mainstream mechanisms responsible for delivering economic inputs, such as training, credit,

improved technologies and market information; and support women-specific delivery mechanisms (such as women's banks or women's business associations) or women's branches within mainstream service institutions (such as chambers of commerce or trade unions).

17. As to activities that support women's organizing to secure increased access to economic resources, such as credit, technology, training and markets, UNIFEM has been supporting three separate groups of women: those who operate profitable full-time small-scale manufacturing, service or trading businesses; those who are own account self-employed workers (including street vendors and artisans); and those who are wage earners (including home-based workers, domestic workers and migrant workers). In Africa, Asia, and Western Asia, UNIFEM has continued to support such activities as trade fairs, which link women entrepreneurs with domestic and international markets. A major constituency for UNIFEM is the own account woman worker who is involved in traditional activities, such as food processing, garments and other traditional, artisanal activities. Again, much of that work is related to strengthening the ability of groups of artisans to access new markets. In Ecuador, UNIFEM has supported a trade fair for indigenous women craft producers, and continues to support a non-governmental organization that assists indigenous women in improving their products and marketing. In Asia and globally, UNIFEM is supporting organizations of home-based workers (affiliated at the global level with HomeNet) to gain access to better wages and conditions of work. UNIFEM is also involved in developing research and statistics activities relating to home-based workers.

18. UNIFEM's many years of working with women's economic activities have shown that public and private-sector mechanisms that deliver inputs for economic activities (e.g., agricultural extension services, banks, commercial equipment suppliers, technology centres, non-governmental organizations, United Nations programmes) are not very effective in reaching women living in poverty. Thus, UNIFEM supports efforts aimed at engendering existing delivery mechanisms, including gender training and the creation of discussion forums for staff of government and United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and commercial entities. In Western Asia, UNIFEM is supporting the engendering of national-level small enterprise development programmes and training local partner organizations (Government and non-governmental organization) on gender-sensitive approaches to delivering business services to women entrepreneurs. In Mexico, UNIFEM has helped to mainstream gender into the UNDP/Global Environment Facility Small Grants Fund through gender training of environmental non-governmental organizations and the joint organization of the Mayan Women's Congress, which has not only increased the gender-responsiveness of the UNDP programme but also contributed to an increase in the levels of organization of indigenous women and their capacity to develop alternative proposals for sustaining their livelihoods.

19. UNIFEM played a significant role at the Microcredit Summit held at Washington, D.C., in February 1997, which was organized to launch a global movement to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families with credit for self-employment and other financial and business services by the year 2005. UNIFEM's work with the Summit before, during and after that event has helped to ensure that micro-lending organizations take into account gender issues in their policies and programmes. As the co-Chair, with UNDP, of the Advisory Council of United Nations Agencies, UNIFEM continues to play a key role in the Summit follow-up.

Micro-level activities

20. At the micro level, UNIFEM supports women to organize around the collection/growing, processing and marketing of products, organizing and networking enable women to take control over resources, to alter bargaining relationships at home, in their community and the market place and to influence national economic policies. Increasingly, UNIFEM is shifting to a subsector approach as a means of reaching large numbers of women facing similar threats and/or opportunities in one enterprise sector. Most recently, UNIFEM has been piloting work in West Africa by supporting women involved in the commercialization of shea butter, assisting them to revamp their production and marketing strategies so as to increase profits, market know-how, and take advantage of new opportunities in Europe and North America. In the Caribbean, UNIFEM assisted – jointly with the EU – a women's fruit processing cooperative in Grenada in consolidating project activities, improving marketing strategies and developing a long-term project focused on poverty alleviation.

21. Another strategy that has been used to support women in coping with threats to their traditional industries and taking advantage of new opportunities arising from globalization and trade liberalization is to increase their access to the training and technologies/techniques they need to move into growth sectors. In Zimbabwe, UNIFEM commissioned a feasibility study on developing a nationwide network of small-scale women's enterprises producing

micro-concrete roofing tiles aimed at Zimbabwe's booming construction industry. Besides being a non-traditional skill and occupation for women, the project has many other innovative features, including the use of interactive computer-based technologies to deliver vocational training to functionally illiterate women and introduction of franchising and joint venture capital financing.

C. Engendering governance and leadership that will increase the participation of women in the decision-making processes that shape their lives, and that will be responsive to the needs and realities of women

22. UNIFEM's governance and leadership programme promotes women's transformational leadership as a critical element in creating just, peaceful and democratic societies. It supports the strengthening of women's capacity to influence – and become – leaders by creating a bridge between the activities of United Nations agencies, national Governments and women.

23. The programme focus includes (a) developing and investing in strategies that promote women's transformational leadership; (b) facilitating gender-sensitive national planning and legislation that create policy frameworks conducive to the increased participation of women; and (c) building the capacity of women and women's organizations to develop leadership skills and participate in decision-making especially for the goals of conflict resolution and peace-building.

Promoting women's transformational leadership and political participation

24. UNIFEM works to increase the number of women participating in political processes and decision-making, while at the same time raising awareness and acceptance of women as a political force. UNIFEM's leadership work, however, is not just about changing the composition of leadership; it is equally about transforming the mainstream to address the grounded realities of women's lives. UNIFEM has been providing support to expand women's participation in politics through voter education and training for political-electoral candidates throughout the Pacific subregion. In the Solomon Islands and in Papua New Guinea, UNIFEM has conducted political awareness training for women as voters and leaders, and workshops on electoral procedures and campaign strategies. Efforts in both countries led to an increase in women running for political office, and securing seats in the national parliaments.

25. In Africa, key non-governmental organizations such as Botswana's Emang Basadi, the Zambian National Women's Lobby Group and the Women Law and Development Federation, a network of African women lawyers, embarked on major campaigns for legal reforms and voter education and registration for women, covering six countries in southern Africa.

26. UNIFEM also works to educate parliamentarians on gender-related issues. In Senegal, UNIFEM worked with the African Institute for Democracy to provide training in leadership-building for newly elected parliamentarians. With UNIFEM support, a non-governmental organization in Paraguay has been providing technical assistance to the Parliament and women's non-governmental organizations on gender-inclusive law-making and legislation. In the Muslim countries of the Asia and Pacific region, UNIFEM assisted the Organization of Women Parliamentarians, based in Pakistan, in launching a Web site (*http://www.comsats.net.pk/owpmc*) so that women legislators in Islamic countries could network and gain access to information on gender issues.

27. The Beijing Platform for Action identified including women in decision-making as a priority area of concern. For the Platform to be implemented, however, Governments must take gender into account during their national planning processes.

Facilitating gender-sensitive national planning

28. Efforts to incorporate gender into India's ninth five-year development plan offer a model for ensuring that women's voices are heard – and heeded – in national planning processes. As the Government of India began to work on the plan in 1997, UNIFEM convened a group of influential women's leaders to work as a "think tank" to advise the Government on gender-inclusive and gender-responsive approaches to national planning. The think tank participated in regional consultations that UNIFEM facilitated at Calcutta, Pune, Bangalore and Chandigarh so that members could hear women's priorities. The consultations focused on economic and political empowerment, violence, health, education, technology, urban poverty, shelter, and environmental protection. From those regional discussions, the think tank produced a synthesis of women's priority issues, and in March 1997, with UNIFEM support, presented it to members of the national planning commission and concerned government ministries.

29. UNIFEM's facilitation and the work of the think tank created opportunities for women to have a voice at every stage of the planning process. The process also allowed UNIFEM to create partnerships with government institutions including the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Rural Development – which have agreed to facilitate the inclusion of gender concerns into planning for their areas. As a result of the project's success, the Indian Government will replicate the process at the state level.

30. UNIFEM worked with SADC to address the issue of women being vastly under-represented in development activities and policies in the 14 States that make up SADC. UNIFEM developed the SADC gender programme in 1992, a comprehensive project to mainstream gender concerns by providing gender-analysis training to personnel in government ministries, national machineries and women's non-governmental organizations. The SADC gender programme also created a projects fund to launch pilot projects and action-oriented research to support women's participation in economic and political development activities. UNIFEM's work over the past five years led to a significant result: in 1997, SADC heads of State signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development at their annual summit meeting. The Declaration is regarded as a mandate to incorporate gender concerns in policies, projects and programmes throughout the region – and a significant step forward in gender mainstreaming.

31. In the West Asia subregion, UNIFEM is supporting the establishment of women in development (WID) or gender and development (GAD) sections in government and non-governmental organization institutions to facilitate gender planning and gender mainstreaming in policy formulation. The WID facilitation initiative ensures that information on WID/GAD projects, programmes and activities is shared among the various actors that implement them: Governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, and national and international non-governmental organizations. The initiative is designed to complement existing coordination mechanisms by increasing access to relevant, up-to-date information on trends and activities with regard to women in development at the national and regional levels. The national units established through the initiative have access to their counterparts in other countries through the UNIFEM Western Asia Regional Programme Office. The regional dimension allows for substantive exchange of experiences between countries. WID facilitation initiatives have been operating successfully in Palestine since 1996. Units have also been set up in Yemen and Egypt.

32. UNIFEM provided technical assistance to the Governments of Nepal and Maldives to prepare action plans to implement the Platform for Action, and to incorporate gender into their national development plans. UNIFEM technical assistance to the United Nations system in Bangladesh was instrumental in facilitating the finalization of a national report on institutional gender mainstreaming. The UNIFEM Caribbean office, in collaboration with the Commonwealth secretariat, participated in a joint exploratory mission in two countries – Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Antigua and Barbuda – to explore the feasibility of establishing a gender management system in the public sector, that would create an enabling environment for gender planning, analysis and evaluation within the national planning processes. Upon completion of the mission, a gender management system was established in Saint Kitts and Nevis on a six-month pilot basis.

Promoting women's participation in peace-building and conflict resolution

33. Women are one of the most adversely affected populations during times of conflict. Physical and sexual violence against women increases, and women unequally bear the brunt of uprootedness. Already viewed as second-class citizens by the legal system in many societies, women's change in status in times of conflict – from citizen to refugee – often results in a further erosion of women's rights and treatment. UNIFEM addresses that situation by strengthening women's capacity to advocate for themselves, influence the peace process, and create new, ethical frameworks for governance and development during reconstruction. UNIFEM's approach to peace-building in conflict and emergency situations has been developed and tested by its support to women affected or displaced by armed conflict in Africa.

34. The African Women in Crisis Umbrella Programme (AFWIC), developed by UNIFEM in 1993, has provided a model for piloting advocacy, catalytic actions and direct-support projects in conflict and post-conflict situations. That approach now feeds into UNIFEM's work in all geographic regions. The AFWIC model provides training to promote gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive responses to conflict resolution and peace. It supports the mainstreaming of gender concerns in policies and programmes that address complex emergencies, national rehabilitation and reconstruction. Through AFWIC, innovative activities and strategies that respond to women's practical and strategic needs in situations of displacement have been tested.

35. UNIFEM is currently supporting the creation of African women's peace networks in the East Africa and the Great Lakes region, including Rwanda, Burundi, the Sudan and Somalia, and has strengthened the capacity of organizations and networks that advocate for gender-responsive policies by supporting the participation of Rwandese, Somali and Sudanese women in the sixteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements in May 1997 to advocate for including women refugee issues in the Habitat agenda; supporting the launch of the Federation of African Women Peace Networks in March 1997; documenting women's peace-building initiatives in Somalia and the Sudan; and supporting an inter-agency peace-building and conflict resolution workshop at Addis Ababa, which was convened under the auspices of the Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

36. In the Manica Province of Mozambique, UNIFEM is collaborating with the Italian Government to support the resettlement of former Mozambican refugees from Zimbabwe and Malawi. The initiative combines literacy skills with support for income-generating activities. In Tajikistan, UNIFEM is working with UNDP to develop pilot projects to strengthen the participation of Tajik women in peace-building. The programme brings together the Government, the international community and civil society groups working to consolidate the peace process.

D. Promoting the realization of women's rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – and the elimination of all forms of violence against women to facilitate women's full participation in their societies

37. In its attempt to foster the political and economic empowerment of women, UNIFEM has utilized a rights-based framework that views the pursuit of sustainable human development as a fundamental human rights issue, and has made women's human rights a centrepiece of its empowerment approach to programming.

38. UNIFEM strategies and activities in the area of human rights are geared to (a) promoting the realization of women's rights (civil, cultural, economic, political and social), improving women's legal and social status, and ensuring that women's rights are recognized as human rights; (b) building women's capacity to understand and use human rights instruments, with a particular focus on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and (c) promoting the elimination of all forms of violence against women, since violence is fundamentally an issue of human rights.

Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

39. The Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women – created at UNIFEM under the guidance of General Assembly resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995 – welcomed the call by the Commission on the Status of Women (March 1998) for increased contributions to the Trust Fund, which are urgently needed in order to meet the growing demand for support. A record number of over 200 proposals were submitted for consideration at the November 1997 and the 1998 funding cycles. The production of information brochures that include guidelines for funding application in English, French, Spanish and Russian have been widely disseminated in all regions. In 1998, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland donated US$ 916,667 to the Trust Fund. In addition, the Government of Japan, which contributed $1 million in 1996/97, gave the Trust Fund an additional contribution of $500,000 in 1998.

40. In November 1997, the Programme Approval Committee for the Trust Fund held its second session, in which it approved a total of $663,000 to 22 projects addressing the problem of violence against women in Azerbaijan, Botswana, Burundi, Croatia, Ghana, Israel, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Slovenia, Turkey, and the Ukraine. In May of 1998, the Committee approved $597,951 to 15 new projects in Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, the Congo, Fiji, Honduras, Mauritius, Palestine, Peru, Somalia and the Russian Federation, as well as four regional projects in Africa, the Arab States, the Caribbean and the MERCOSUR countries. An additional 14 projects were selected for approval pending further contributions to the Trust Fund.

41. The Committee has been comprised of a large number of United Nations partners, including UNIFEM, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNDP, the International Research and Training Centre for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (also representing the Special Rapporteur on violence against women), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United

Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and the World Health Organization, as well as two non-governmental organizations representatives.

42. Projects approved for funding by the Trust Fund address a range of different manifestations of violence against women, including domestic violence and traditional practices recognized as forms of violence against women, such as female genital mutilation and the practice of "honour killings" of women. Special attention was given to violence against women in the context of war and civil strife. In addition, in congruence with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the Trust Fund lent its support to projects focusing on the problem of international trafficking in women.

43. Projects funded apply a wide range of strategies, including action-oriented research, media and educational campaigns, community mobilization, training for professionals and legal reform projects. 1998 also saw an increase in funding for projects focused on building the capacity of national and local governments to address the problem of violence against women.

44. The Trust Fund has developed a proposal to set up a parallel "learning component" to study and assess project results, and extract and disseminate useful lessons learned, which would guide the Trust Fund's future operational strategies. The Trust Fund Programme Approval Committee strongly endorsed that proposal, which was subsequently awarded a $300,000 two-year grant by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in July 1998. The learning component for the Trust Fund is scheduled to become operational by the end of 1998.

Inter-agency campaign on violence against women

45. In 1997, UNIFEM initiated inter-agency regional awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, currently in varying stages of development and implementation. The Latin American and Caribbean Campaign to Eliminate Violence against Women, formally launched in March 1998, is an example of the United Nations system collaborating at the regional level to increase impact and fulfil commitments to gender equality goals. The campaign, on the theme "A life free of violence: it's our right", was convened by UNIFEM, and is being coordinated by UNIFEM's office in Ecuador. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNAIDS and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean are all participating in the planning, launching and implementation of numerous activities, and different agencies are taking the lead for different aspects of the work. Currently, 19 Latin American and Caribbean Governments have formally endorsed the campaign.

46. In all countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region, highly publicized events on the issue of gender-based violence have been organized, particularly around the activities commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The campaign is premised on the understanding that long-lasting solutions can only emanate from communities that see that issue as one that hampers the development of all members of society. The Campaign will also address the human, social and economic costs of violence against women, and the need to empower women as valuable partners inside and outside the home.

47. A particularly vital initiative of the campaign is the involvement of local government and communities. The municipality of Mexico City, for instance, will coordinate a challenge to municipalities throughout the region to present examples of the ways in which they are promoting and protecting women's human rights at the local level. Three examples will be selected for wide dissemination and learning.

48. The regional campaign in Africa, announced in May 1998, will highlight violence against women in war situations, when violence against women is often used as a weapon of destruction, and in a post-conflict context, where widowed women have become heads of household yet often remain disenfranchised of their legal and human rights. Similar campaigns are planned in Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

49. The regional campaigns will use strategies similar to those successfully used to date in the Latin American and Caribbean campaign, and will emphasize the linkages between violence and women's continued marginalization from economic, political and social decision-making processes. The campaigns involve United Nations agencies, civil society partners and Governments to ensure that they are far-reaching and inclusive. The mobilization of United Nations system-wide support at the operational level for the initiative increases the chance that the regional campaigns will reap concrete results, linking commitments by Governments in the area of violence against women with country assistance agreements with the United Nations.

CEDAW global training workshop

50. UNIFEM work on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women focuses on

increasing the number of women's groups working on and monitoring the implementation of the Convention; promoting non-governmental organizations understanding of and efforts to lift or narrow reservations to the Convention; improving the legal and social status of women; and ensuring that women are better informed about their rights.

51. In response to the Beijing mandate, which recognizes that as the "Bill of Rights" for women, the Convention constitutes a critical area of work in the promotion and protection of women's human rights, UNIFEM has embarked on an annual programme aimed at expanding the understanding and use of the Convention by women's rights advocates.

52. In preparation for the sixteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in January 1997, UNIFEM joined with the International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW)/ Asia-Pacific in organizing a pilot activity to train human rights activists from the non-governmental organization community whose countries were or would soon be reporting to the Committee. UNIFEM and IWRAW/Asia-Pacific convened a training team made up of experienced non-governmental organization advocates from Malaysia, the Philippines, Costa Rica and the United States of America. The training deepened participants' understanding of the Convention as a key organizing tool in advocating for women's human rights. It also provided participants with opportunities to make direct contact with Committee members and discuss ways in which mutual support could be fostered.

53. The training workshop participants, from Bangladesh, Canada, Morocco, the Philippines, Turkey and former Zaire, were provided an intensive two-day orientation on the Convention, followed by an immediate opportunity to apply what they had learned by spending a week observing the Committee in session. Many of the participants took advantage of their presence during the Committee's session to produce alternative reports with other non-governmental organizations in their countries, which they brought to the Committee's attention. The Committee welcomed the effort by UNIFEM and IWRAW/Asia-Pacific, and as a result of their support UNIFEM has made a commitment to hold the global training workshop on an annual basis. The most recent workshop was held during the January 1998 session of the Committee.

54. The Committee has urged UNIFEM to intensify its programming in support of implementation of the Convention; to utilize the expertise of the Committee members at the national level; and to increase its commitment to becoming to the Convention what UNICEF is to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mainstreaming the human rights of women

55. UNIFEM mainstreaming activities on human rights have been a logical follow-up to the recommendations made by the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, involving (a) a sustained presence at the annual sessions of the Commission on Human Rights; (b) collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in its efforts towards gender integration into the human rights machinery; and (c) fostering the development of non-governmental organization expertise in and exposure to the international human rights arena.

56. UNIFEM strategy with regard to mainstreaming the human rights of women has been to play a facilitating role, using its position within the United Nations system as the operational fund for women to create opportunities for national and international non-governmental organizations, Governments and other United Nations agencies to gather and engage in a substantive dialogue on how best to implement the commitments made to women's human rights in various international arenas. Its activities in that area have centred primarily on advocacy for the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the treaty and non-treaty monitoring bodies.

57. In order to increase reporting of gender-specific violations by the international human rights machinery, UNIFEM has produced relevant publications showing the connections between gender and human rights; supported the participation of women's human rights advocates at the annual sessions of the Commission on Human Rights; sponsored briefings for the thematic special rapporteurs on gender integration (at the request of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights); and supported the field missions of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

58. UNIFEM has collaborated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights by conducting a briefing on ways in which gender-based violations of the human rights of women could be documented in the investigations conducted by thematic and country rapporteurs appointed by the Commission on Human Rights. The report of the Commission on its fifty-third session makes a special mention of the UNIFEM briefing, which noted some of the remaining challenges in such work. Expanding an understanding of the different ways in which gender affects the ability of men and women to enjoy their rights, as well as training in gender awareness for all those

engaged in carrying out the work of human rights, including the staff of the Office, are some of the tasks that lie ahead.

59. The production of advocacy and training materials on the human rights of women is another component of UNIFEM work to strengthen women's human rights advocacy. Materials published by UNIFEM include an information kit on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1995); "Integrating gender: bringing a gender perspective into the United Nations human rights system" (1997 and 1998); and "Commitments to rights: a cross-reference guide to the human rights of women and girls in the Beijing Platform for Action and related United Nations conferences and conventions" (1998).

III. Supporting the United Nations reform process to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment

60. In 1997, the United Nations reform agenda provided UNIFEM with a wide range of opportunities to enhance its work on promoting women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. UNIFEM coordinates with other agencies to increase the impact of United Nations work to eradicate feminized poverty and gender-based violence, to promote and protect women's human rights, and to advance women's transformational leadership. For UNIFEM, true coordination for gender mainstreaming, empowerment and equality means: (a) stronger links between the policy/norm-setting activities and counterpart operational activities of the United Nations system; (b) synergy among United Nations agencies, where each brings its comparative advantage and diverse constituencies; and (c) a growing knowledge base of effective strategies shared among United Nations agencies and UNIFEM's non-governmental organizations and government partners.

61. The inter-agency campaign to eliminate violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean (coordinated by UNIFEM), and the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women (administered by UNIFEM) are examples of synergy that can be created through inter-agency collaboration. For both initiatives, UNIFEM secured the involvement of several United Nations funds, programmes and agencies – epitomizing the spirit of reform and responding to a cross-cutting theme of a number of world conferences. In other cases, UNIFEM has acted as a catalyst to ensure that gender concerns are taken into account – such as its co-chairing, with UNDP, of United Nations participation in the Microcredit Summit Council of United Nations agencies (each of those initiatives have been discussed in greater length earlier in the report).

62. UNIFEM's work as a gender adviser to the resident coordinator system is a critical component in ensuring that United Nations country teams have the capacity to recognize and respond to gender issues. During 1997, UNIFEM laid the groundwork for placing gender advisers to the resident coordinator system in 10 countries. Each gender adviser will be placed for a two-year term, will work closely with the resident coordinator and will play a catalytic role in relation to the overall United Nations system at the country level. The gender adviser will focus on one, or in some cases, two countries. Countries have been chosen on the basis of demonstrated interest and commitment of the resident coordinator and the level of activity and commitment on the part of Government and civil society to the Beijing Platform for Action. Gender advisers will be backstopped by the UNIFEM regional programme adviser.

63. UNIFEM collaborates with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in supporting six field-based gender, population and development advisers. In addition, UNIFEM, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and UNDP have fielded 15 gender specialists to strengthen support for national-level implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Gender specialists are currently located in Botswana, Cambodia, Cameroon, Côte d' Ivoire, Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Panama, Turkmenistan, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

64. UNIFEM actively seeks opportunities to bring other United Nations funds, programmes and agencies into its work with Governments on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. UNIFEM, for example, has secured inter-agency participation on programmes to collect data disaggregated by sex in South Asia and advocate for women's land rights in East Africa.

65. To more effectively catalyse inter-agency efforts, UNIFEM is analysing the factors that support or inhibit coordination on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. In 1997, UNIFEM's East Africa regional office commissioned a study on coordination among United Nations agencies on gender issues. The study confirmed that coordination will result in investments and programmes that support national-level action to achieve gender equality only when gender is viewed as a cross-cutting responsibility and

taken up by the highest-level decision makers in the country office.

66. In its potential to provide a consistent framework for United Nations activities on the ground, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is a critical part of the Secretary-General's reform. For UNDAF to achieve its potential, it must be used as an action-oriented instrument that responds to national priorities, while taking key recommendations of United Nations world conferences into account.

67. In recognition of UNDAF's potential, UNIFEM has actively participated in its development. UNIFEM's Executive Director participated in the conceptualization of UNDAF in her work with the United Nations Development Group. Two UNIFEM regional programme advisers participated in the UNDAF global support team, travelling to countries in which UNDAF was being piloted. In addition, UNIFEM regional programme advisers are located in three UNDAF countries.

68. During the Economic and Social Council high-level segment on gender mainstreaming in July 1997, UNIFEM's Executive Director provided delegates with a number of practical ideas for mainstreaming gender into the work of United Nations country teams, particularly in light of the pilot exercises to field-test UNDAF. Those recommendations were used as the basis for UNIFEM's contributions – on behalf of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE) – to an inter-agency meeting on coordinated follow-up to United Nations world conferences held at Turin in December 1997. The recommendations were subsequently incorporated into a guidance note to the resident coordinator system distributed by the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions.

69. UNIFEM plays an active role in mechanisms established at headquarters to promote coordination and collaboration as a follow-up to United Nations world conferences. UNIFEM is chairing the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Gender Subgroup. UNIFEM also collaborated closely with the IACWGE as its liaison to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) inter-agency task forces on follow-up to United Nations world conferences, and is currently co-task manager (with UNDP) for the IACWGE good practices initiative, which builds on UNIFEM's strong links to field-level activities.

70. UNIFEM regional programme advisers have chaired inter-agency thematic or working groups on gender in Brazil, Mexico, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Thailand and India. Those groups involve gender focal points from all of the other United Nations agencies operating in the country in meetings, information-sharing, and joint activities to promote gender equality.

71. In 1998, UNIFEM invited UNICEF to collaborate in the production of a tool to assist representatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations bodies to monitor implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The guide, entitled "Commitment to rights", cross-references the commitments made by Governments in the chapters on the human rights of women and girls in the Beijing Platform for Action to existing obligations in international human rights law and to commitments made by States at other United Nations world conferences.

IV. Building a knowledge base on women's empowerment and gender equality

72. UNIFEM has significant experience in identifying emerging women's empowerment strategies before they are recognized by the mainstream development assistance community. Its work on promotion of microcredit for women and support for innovative strategies to eliminate violence against women demonstrates how initiatives, once proven effective, can be expanded by agencies with greater resources.

73. UNIFEM's 1997 strategy and business plan committed the organization to strengthening its capacity to learn from its efforts and disseminate this learning. During 1997, the focus has been on four main areas: (a) undertaking strategic reviews of UNIFEM subprogrammes with a view towards identifying learning that can be applied cross-regionally; (b) creating vehicles and systems to capture and disseminate learning, and involving staff and partners in the process of so doing, as well as supporting documentation and dissemination at the field level; and (c) providing opportunities for UNIFEM staff to acquire skills and think strategically about different learning and knowledge management systems.

74. UNIFEM undertakes external evaluations of its subprogrammes every nine months. In 1997, two economic empowerment subprogrammes were reviewed. The external evaluation of UNIFEM's work on women's enterprise development confirmed that UNIFEM's comparative advantage was best employed by focusing on rights, access, structural change, introducing an empowerment agenda, and supporting networks. The evaluation recommended that

UNIFEM concentrate on strategic thematic or sectoral areas or a targeted group of countries, and explore opportunities to improve statistical accounting of women's work in the informal sector.

75. The review on gender and environment began in 1996 as a part of a larger initiative to create a framework for research and policy on gender, environment and development. The review analysed the achievements of 10 UNIFEM-supported projects. It found that projects with a greater likelihood of contributing to empowerment are smaller projects that are linked to broader initiatives, and those that work at multiple levels.

76. Developing high-visibility vehicles for disseminating its learning to policy makers, project partners, media, and other stakeholders is an important component of UNIFEM's work. One of those developed in 1997 include WomenWatch (*www.un.org/womenwatch*). A collaborative project of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, UNIFEM, and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), WomenWatch is the Internet gateway to United Nations information on women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming. UNIFEM has also developed its own Web site (*www.unifem.undp.org*) to communicate UNIFEM activities andlearnings.

77. For UNIFEM to gather and apply its knowledge effectively, staff need to understand and design programmes that incorporate strong learning components. In 1997, UNIFEM expanded staff capacity by providing training in results-based management and knowledge management. UNIFEM's approach to knowledge management is about using knowledge that resides in UNIFEM and in its web of partnerships and alliances, and giving it coherent form. The impact of such training has been widespread. Project documents, the project approval process and other types of documentation are being more systematically linked through UNIFEM's new management information system, to be finalized in 1998.

V. Financial management

78. For the period ended 31 December 1997, core contributions received totalled $13.95 million, an increase of $0.84 million or 6.3 per cent over the 1996 total of $13.11 million. That level of income includes the 1997 pledge from the Government of Japan of $1.76 million, which was received in 1998 and will be included in 1998 income. The income growth resulted from increases in the annual contributions of 15 donor Governments, along with first-time contributions from three others.

79. The 1998 pledging conference held in November 1997 resulted in $5.138 million in written and verbal pledges from 17 donor Governments. Those pledges, when combined with UNIFEM's informal discussions with its traditional donors who did not pledge, as well as actual increases subsequently received, indicate that UNIFEM is estimated to receive approximately $16.7 million in income for 1998. That projected increase of $3.4 million represents a combination of actual and estimated increases from four donors as of 31 July 1998, as well as the 1997 pledge from the Government of Japan in the amount of $1.76 million received in 1998. If that amount is excluded, the projected income is estimated to be $14.94 million, or approximately $2 million over the earlier estimate.

80. During 1997, UNIFEM continued to seek opportunities for co-financing arrangements. As a result of those efforts, a total of $4.2 and $1.2 million were received for cost-sharing and sub-trust funds, respectively. That represented an increase of $1.8 million, or 45 per cent over the 1996 level of $4.0 million. That upward trend has continued in 1998, with receipts to 31 July 1998 of $1.3 million and $2.6 million for cost-sharing and sub-trust funds, respectively. Firm commitments from the donors amount to $2.0 million and $1.9 million for a total of $3.3 million and $4.5 million for cost-sharing and sub-trust funds, respectively.

81. The total contributions from core and co-financing activities amounted to $19.3 million for 1997, as compared to $17.0 million for 1996.

82. Expenditures on projects funded from general resources amounted to $6.6 million, a decrease of $1.1 million from 1996. Expenditures on cost-sharing and sub-trust funds, on the other hand, increased by $0.4 million, from $3.3 million to $3.7 million.

83. The operational reserve was re-established in 1996 at a level of $3 million. The 1997 review, carried out in February 1998, revised the level of the reserve to $3.5 million.